

8 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Assessment of Midcareer Executive
Development Course

1. This is in reply to your memorandum dated 20 March 1968 concerning the above subject.

2. We have conducted an extensive survey of the Intelligence Directorate in order to provide you with the answers to your specific questions. Attached is a detailed report of this survey which presents the analysis of our Midcareer evaluation.

3. In summary our survey reveals the following:

a. The MEDC is an excellent and useful course and should be retained as an in-house training capability for training future Agency executives.

b. The present curriculum balance is good. The survey reveals that more management training, such as the Advanced Management Planning Course, should not be added to the MEDC. The AMP can be made part of the Midcareer Program.

c. Six weeks is long enough for the MEDC, as is the frequency of four runnings of the course per year.

d. Eliminate the five year plans from the Midcareer Program concept.

e. Increase, on a temporary basis, the DDI quota for each course from six to nine.

f. The present age and grade limits are generally satisfactory. However, provision should be made to accept especially well-deserving GS-13's below age 35.

g. No fundamental changes were indicated in the selection criteria or in the course itself.

Chief, Administrative Staff
O/DDI

Att: a/s

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Attachment A

A. General

1. The Intelligence Directorate, in considering the questions raised by the Director of Training, undertook a survey of the Directorate to obtain a representative opinion sampling of the Midcareer Course. This sampling, we felt, not only would provide a broad range of opinion, but we would also benefit from a retrospective analysis of the course by those who attended it from the onset of the program to the most recent classes.

2. Our survey included approximately 30% of all members of the Directorate who attended the MEDC, as well as Office Heads, Deputy Office Heads, senior supervisors, and personnel and/or support officers. With one or two rare exceptions, all of those surveyed were highly pleased with the course and stressed the need for an in-house training capability of this kind.

3. In addition, O/DDI Admin developed a series of questions which related to and augmented the questions raised by D/OTR. We wanted to obtain as comprehensive an analysis of the course and the program as possible so that interested senior Agency officials would be made aware of our concern for a thorough evaluation of the Midcareer Executive Development Course.

4. The answers to the specific questions raised in the memorandum from D/OTR have to be made in the context of defining the real purpose of the Midcareer Course. Therefore, our first question to all personnel surveyed dealt with this purpose. The majority (65%) response to this question was that the purpose of the course is to broaden the midcareerist's perspective of the Agency, to become familiar with the organization and the intelligence community, and to make contacts with other Agency employees. Approximately 20% of those surveyed stated that the purpose was to identify and develop executives or managers. About 15% stated the purpose was to give a man a break from his job, to improve his morale, or to meet a training quota.

5. We next raised the question of the MEDC as an executive development vehicle. In pursuing this question, we addressed ourselves to the curriculum "mix" of the course. Allowing for semantic liberties of what is executive development, the response was that the course

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"mix" was good and that the course should be continued for the purpose it is intended. Our reasoning is that one facet of Agency executive training is knowing where one fits in his organization and where his organization fits in the intelligence community. The MEDC meets the Agency's particular need for an integral managerial development program. The balance between emphasis on the Agency, the intelligence community, and the Managerial Grid (for earlier Midcareerists, the Brookings) is satisfactory. We asked whether more management concepts and techniques should be included in the course. The reply was negative with few exceptions. The Grid concept was challenged by a vocal minority who felt it to be marginal in utility, a gimmick, and a feeling that it was overstated. Those who felt this way suggested that the Grid be shortened and that other concepts and trends be included, such as how to handle day-to-day personnel problems, some understanding of the budget cycle in the executive branch of government, and an introduction to PPB in the Agency. The idea of stressing more management tools, trends, and concepts as related to "executive development" was not acceptable to the vast majority of those questioned.

6. The obvious reluctance for inclusion of additional management tool courses is reflected in the answers as to whether the Advanced Management Planning Course should be made part of the MEDC. The sentiment from all categories interviewed was that the AMP should not be made part of the MEDC. Making the AMP part of the Midcareer Program was quite acceptable. In this way, the present MEDC would retain its present integrity and not be contaminated with additional management theories. It is interesting to note that of those categories surveyed the senior supervisors showed the most positive approach toward including the AMP in the MEDC, although as a group the vote was still negative; but the difference of opinion was close. It is possible that one of the reasons for the negative response is that the course is relatively new and many people have not been exposed to it yet. The perspective may change as more middle managers take the course and pass the word on its merits to their supervisors.

7. As part of our survey we asked the Deputy Office Heads if they felt that a manager should have the MEDC before promotion to GS-15. A plurality said "yes" on the basis that it was worthwhile (but not mandatory) to have the course, but a man would certainly not be denied

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promotion consideration to GS-15 just because he did not have the course. Related to this question is the matter of the significance of the promotion criterion. The promotion criterion (potential to GS-15) seems to be significant in terms of the favorable psychological impact on the midcareerist who attends the course. The point needs to be emphasized to the midcareerist, however, that this criterion means potential only and does not guarantee advancement, as other unknown or unmanageable factors play a role in assignments and promotions.

8. Most of those interviewed felt that the course length of six weeks was sufficient to meet the needs of the MEDC. A few people suggested reducing the length of the course by streamlining selected phases, such as the trip, the intelligence community portion, and outside speakers. Hardly anyone suggested lengthening the course under any circumstances. It seems there is a psychological acceptance for being away from the office for six weeks or less but not any longer, especially for an "in-house" course.

9. One of our areas of interest was what changes or comments the interviewees had to make about the course as differentiated from the program. It was our intent to determine how the midcareerist and the other categories of personnel related the course to the program. Undoubtedly, some of the comments made by the midcareerists about the course have been reflected in the individual critiques made at the conclusion of their respective courses.

10. The overall opinion was that no fundamental changes need to be made in the MEDC. One suggestion presented by several supervisors and midcareerists was that case studies on Agency day-to-day problems should be included in the management phase (presently the Grid) of the course. The feeling existed that, since the midcareerists were middle level managers, they should be helped in better understanding how to solve effectively office problems that arise periodically. Too many times a problem arises, and it is passed to the personnel officer to solve instead of the supervisor confidently resolving it. One way to help him would be to share common case problems in the course and work on various solutions. Another suggestion made by some supervisors and midcareerists was to de-emphasize the GS-15 potential criterion. This seemed particularly significant to those offices whose table of organization was lacking in the

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number of GS-15 jobs. In such cases, the GS-14 may be a more realistic managerial grade to which to aspire. It was felt that eliminating the stated GS-15 potential criterion would not detract from the purpose or desirability of the course. The fact that a man is considered to have potential for advancement to the executive level should be proof enough for him to appreciate selection as a midcareerist.

11. The related question of the Midcareer Program concept brought forth very strong negative statements from about 90% of those interviewed. Somehow or other, there appears to be a lack of understanding as to what the "Program" really means. Essentially, a gap exists in the understanding of the relationship between the MEDC and the MEDP. It is as though there were two different worlds, instead of the MEDC being an integral part of the total MEDP. Specifically noteworthy was the critical attitude toward the development, formulation, and execution of the five year training and assignment plan. This concept brought forth a variety of interesting epithets. Some typical comments were: "A Sham," "patently phony," "just a piece of paper," "a bureaucratic formality," "no relationship to career development" (mentioned by the majority), "unrealistic," "doesn't relate to the real world," "vague and mystifying," "wasn't aware any program existed," "program concept not needed and is impractical," and "okay for a think piece."

12. Approximately 10% felt that the five year planning concept was worthwhile and meaningful. They suggested that the individual five year plans be retained in order to keep "eyes on the future executive." Others stated that "It forces managers to look ahead toward vacancies," and "The concept is okay, but what we really need is an Agency-wide career development program."

13. The recommendation of the 90% majority was to drop that portion of the program that pertains to the five year planning paper. Keep the heart of the program, the MEDC, as its own entity and select people for it on the basis of existing criteria and cease trying to make something out of a planned program. Among the comments supporting this view were: "We should be realistic and face the fact that we do not have mobility in the Agency that enhances career development." "Let's recognize the inherent weakness of career designation labels; let's recognize that there is no overall Agency career development staff to implement the concept."

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"Recognize that the nature of the Agency is not conducive to what most people think of as a career development concept; i.e., planned rotation tied in with advancement." "We are an Agency of specialists, and this reduces our mobility within the Agency and within the Government in general." It was stated also that the five year midcareer plans were not being followed or reviewed at the halfway point to make any modifications of the plan.

14. One of our key concerns in reviewing our selection criteria was how realistic the assignments and training have been in relation to career and training objectives outlined in the career plan. To determine this, we asked the offices to comment on each of the five year plans that had been prepared by the midcareerist and essentially to bring the plan up to date. The results of this survey were inconclusive. The career plans made within the past year are too new to evaluate realistically. The older plans ranged from a high correlation of proposed and actual training and assignment to a very low correlation. It must be remembered that, within the offices in the Intelligence Directorate, the proposed assignments are generally limited to the office of assignment and a few overseas opportunities. Our review suggests that the career plans were not completely unrealistic because the frame of reference was fairly well defined. The chances were that the midcareerist would have probably moved into the position and training requested regardless of the career plan. In this sense, however, the career plan may have some limited validity. Where proposed assignments outside the immediate office were involved, especially outside the Directorate, the five year career plans were unrealistic. This would tend to support the majority view that the career plans could be eliminated as part of the Midcareer process without any adverse career effects.

B. Selection Criteria

1. In considering further the matter of selection criteria, we asked the Deputy Directors, supervisors, and support officers whether the grade limits should be broadened to include GS-12's. The respondents did not feel this to be a good idea, the main reason being that most GS-12's are not in middle management positions and that, in effect, the selection criteria would be cheapened. It was stressed, however, that allowances should be made

for exceptional instances where the grade structure was so narrow that officers in the GS-12 category were in fact performing functions that in other components would be at a higher grade and where more opportunities for advancement were present. Within the Intelligence Directorate this would be a rare occurrence. In most cases experience indicates that once the employee moves into the GS-13 level he is likely to be watched more carefully by senior officials in terms of executive identification.

2. The question was asked if any preference should be given in assignments, training, or promotion to mid-careerists who attend the course. The reply was overwhelmingly "no." In the vast majority of cases, mid-careerists selected for the course happen to be ones being moved into management assignments with greater responsibility. Others are not necessarily excluded. There are many midcareerists who cannot be released for training or cannot attend because of limited quotas, which fact should not be held against them. Except for a few respondents, the prevailing comment was that it would be unfair to penalize those who did not go to the course through no fault of their own. It is interesting to note that, from the beginning of the course until the present time, about one-third of the Intelligence Directorate midcareerists attending the course have received promotions. From 1963 to 1967 approximately 32.5% of those who attended the course were promoted. During the 1963 to 1965 period of classes, approximately 50% have been promoted. As a matter of fact, five midcareerists have received two promotions. These statistics by themselves may not mean too much at this stage of the program. It will be interesting to observe, however, what the promotion trend is over a longer time span as more midcareerists attend the course.

3. As stated in the covering memorandum, there were no suggestions for fundamental changes in the selection criteria. Several proposals were made, however, which might be considered within the Intelligence Directorate and by OTR. One suggestion was that nominees for MEDC be interviewed. Several supervisors suggested making the MEDC less selective; getting more people into the course, especially specialists as they need it more than generalists who supposedly have benefited from broader Agency experience. Our present quota of six per class appears to be adequate. However, we would like to consider the possibility of raising the Directorate

quota on a temporary basis for the next 12 to 18 months. Our suggestion is to increase the quota by three (from six to nine) for each course, if space is available, in order to meet the demands of an existing backlog in our offices for course attendance.